

Message Text

SECRET

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EXDIS
STADIS/////////////////
NEA FOR SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR IS EG LE JO
SUBJ: DEMARCHES TO THE ISRAELIS

1. THERE IS CERTAINLY NO SHORTAGE OF AREAS OF DISPUTE
AT THE MOMENT BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE ISRAELIS.
IN ADDITION TO DEEPENING DIFFERENCES OVER THE PEACE
PROCESS, WE HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE GOI ON SETTLEMENTS
IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, OIL EXPLORATION AND
PRODUCTION IN THE SINAI, ALLEGED TORTURE OF WEST BANK
PALESTINIANS, CIVIL AIR NEGOTIATIONS, MATMON C, SOUTH
LEBANON, SOUTH AFRICA, ETC. AD NAUSEUM. ALL THESE
ISSUES ARE IMPORTANT, AND NONE OF THEM CAN BE
COMPLETELY LEFT ASIDE AS WE PURSUE OUR EFFORTS TO PUSH
THE ISRAELIS TOWARD PEACE.

2. HOWEVER, I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE NUMBER OF DISPARATE,
HIGH-LEVEL DEMARCHES WASHINGTON HAS ASKED US TO MAKE
TO THE ISRAELIS IN RECENT WEEKS AND EVEN MORE CONCERNED
ABOUT THE WEEKS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD. GIVEN THE NATURE
OF THE GOVERNMENT HERE, INEVITABLY ON NEARLY ALL THESE
MATTERS WE MUST TALK TO BEGIN, WEIZMAN OR DAYAN. THERE
ARE SIMPLY NO OTHER SUITABLE INTERLOCUTORS IN THE

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ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, INDEED NO ONE ELSE WHO CAN PRODUCE
THE ACTION WE DESIRE. WE HAVE TO TAKE SPECIAL CARE TO
INSURE THAT WE DONT HIT THE ISRAELIS TOO OFTEN ON
TOO MANY ISSUES IN TOO SHORT A TIME, ESPECIALLY IN A
PERIOD WHEN THEY ARE EVEN MORE SENSITIVE THAN USUAL
ABOUT U S INTERFERENCE IN THEIR AFFAIRS.

3. AS YOU KNOW, WHATEVER WE DO WILL PRODUCE A MEASURE OF PARANOIA IN SOME ISRAELIS. AND THEY TEND TO SEE DELIBERATE PATTERNS IN OUR MOVES WHERE NONE INDEED EXIST. SOMETIMES THAT PARANOIA CAN BE KEPT WITHIN BOUNDS, AS INDEED I THINK IT HAS BEEN THE PAST WEEK BY A MEASURED U S REACTION TO THE ISRAELI ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS. SUCH DEFTNESS SHOULD BE OUR OBJECTIVE, HOWEVER IRRITATED OR FRUSTRATED WE MAY BECOME. BUT I FEAR THE COMING WEEKS WILL SEE EVERYTHING WE DO HERE CONNECTED IN ISRAELI MINDS WITH THE PRESUMED "RUN-UP" TO OUR TABLING THE INFAMOUS "AMERICA PEACE PLAN". OUR GOVERNMENT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE MOVING FORWARD ON A CALCULATED COURSE TO DENIGRATE ISRAEL'S REPUTATION WITH THE US PUBLIC, SOW SEEDS OF DISCORD WITHIN ISRAEL ITSELF, AND SOFTEN UP THE GOI FOR THAT DREAD DENOUEMENT. KNOWING THE ISRAELIS AS WELL AS YOU DO, YOU CAN READILY UNDERSTAND HOW THIS PARANOIA WILL FEED UPON ITSELF. MY CONVICTION IS THAT WE HAVE MORE HOPE HERE TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS IN THE PEACE PROCESS IF WE DO NOT, EITHER DELIBERATELY OR INADVERTENTLY, ACT IN WAYS WHICH HEIGHTEN ISRAEL'S SENSE OF POLITICAL INSECURITY. THAT WILL REQUIRE VERY CAREFUL SELECTION AMONG OUR OWN PRIORITIES ON OTHER TOPICS.

4. I THEREFORE HOPE YOU WILL TAKE AN ESPECIALLY CLOSE LOOK AT ANY INSTRUCTIONS SENT US WHICH REQUIRE A HIGH-LEVEL
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APPROACH TO THE GOI, TO SATISFY YOURSELF THAT THE PARTICULAR ISSUE IS AMONG OUR MAJOR CURRENT PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO ISRAEL. THOSE PRIORITIES, FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, RELATE PRINCIPALLY TO THE PEACE PROCESS. I HOPE YOU CAN KEEP THE PERIPHERAL STATIC DOWN WHILE WE GO AFTER THAT CENTRAL, OVERRIDING GOAL. LEWIS

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NNN

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